



COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY
REPUBLICANS Frank Lucas, Ranking Member

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Frank Lucas

Energy Subcommittee Hearing

*From Lab to Market: Accelerating our Progress toward Economic Recovery and
a Clean Energy Future*

July 17, 2020

I'm looking forward to today's hearing on Federal technology transfer initiatives, which is incredibly important to the success of U.S. research and development.

Technology transfer maximizes the return on investment of Federal research dollars by putting groundbreaking technologies and scientific discoveries in the hands of the private sector. It is an essential component of any plan to maintain U.S. leadership in science and technology, and it's why we have a history of bipartisan support for it. And supporting our federal research enterprise has never been more important.

Today, in addition to the task of recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and restarting both our economy and our research enterprise, the United States is facing two fundamental challenges to our competitiveness and success as a nation:

First, foreign countries, especially China, are threatening to outpace us in science and technology, jeopardizing the long-term stability of our supply chains, research workforce, and technological growth.

Second, we must respond to our changing climate and develop next-generation technologies to understand it, address it, and manage its effects.

Back in January, I introduced H.R. 5685, the Securing American Leadership in Science and Technology Act, which creates a long-term strategy for investment in basic research and infrastructure to protect these economic, environmental, and national security interests of the United States. A key provision of this bill is to improve the effectiveness of Federal R&D investments through comprehensive technology transfer reform which promotes better collaboration between the federal government and private industry using a whole of government approach.

We need this focus not just at the Department of Energy, but also through the National Science Foundation, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

We know that our technology transfer capabilities are highly diverse and extend well beyond the reach of any one agency. When we consider technology transfer policies, we must ensure that all our Federal research agencies have the tools they require to efficiently and effectively transfer R&D outcomes to the private sector where they can be utilized by American industry.

Today's hearing gives us the chance to consider legislation to authorize tech transfer activities at the Department of Energy. I believe that limiting our technology transfer discussion to the scope of a single agency's activities, we may be missing out on big picture issues, collaborative mechanisms, and innovative new ways to facilitate technology transfer.

That said, I support many of the concepts outlined within these bills--common sense provisions like the regional clean energy innovation partnerships, the small business voucher program, and the establishment of signature authority for national laboratory directors – an issue we have long championed on the Science Committee. I believe there are important government-wide lessons to be learned from the technology transfer activities of the DOE national laboratories and I am pleased that we have Pacific Northwest National Laboratory's Dr. Lee Cheatham with us today. Not only does Dr. Cheatham serve as Director of Technology Deployment and Outreach at PNNL, and Chair of the National Laboratory Technology Transfer Working Group, he also brings insight into broader Federal activities through his service on the National Science Foundation's Business and Operations Advisory Committee.

I want to thank Chairwoman Fletcher for holding this hearing and all of our witnesses for their testimony today. I commend my friends across the aisle for prioritizing this issue and look forward to a productive and valuable discussion. I feel confident that by working together we can continue to encourage innovation across the U.S. research enterprise and give our Federal agencies the resources they need to deliver on our national investment in science and technology.